



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 14, 2004

SIX MONTHS AND 20 MILLION GALLONS LATER, V CORPS FUELERS END 45-DAY MISSION

By Capt. Theresa K. Helus

701st Main Support Battalion, 1st Infantry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — Twenty million gallons. That's how much JP8 aviation fuel the troops of A Company of the 701st Main Support Battalion of V Corps' 1st Infantry Division issued at its "Main Team" bulk fuel tank farm here before handing off their mission to the U.S. Navy's B Company, 528th Petroleum last week.



COURTESY PHOTO

During a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, 1st Lt. Matthew Calhoun, the fuel accountable officer for A Company of V Corps' 701st Main Support Battalion, closes the valve on the unit's bulk fuel tank farm, signifying the end of the company's mission there.

A transfer of authority ceremony marked the conclusion of a six-month period during which the unit's Soldiers issued 20,560,076 gallons of fuel -- more than three times what their mission calls for -- to divisional and non-divisional coalition forces units from Kirkuk to Baghdad.

The ceremony was punctuated by A Company's outgoing fuel accountable officer and petroleum platoon leader, 1st Lt. Matthew Calhoun, symbolically closing the tank farm's main gate valve, which was then reopened by Calhoun's replacement, Navy Lt. James Cramer from 528th Petroleum.

The 701st's "deliberate relief in place" started the process of replacing the battalion with the incoming 50th MSB, said Lt. Col. Drexel K. Ross, the 701st commander. But it had a more special meaning as well, he added.

"It also marks the first phase of our journey home for the A Company 'Gator Tough' petroleum Soldiers, and entrusts care of this corps-level mission to equally dedicated professionals," Ross said.

The Company A petroleum platoon had accepted responsibility for the tank farm in similar fashion from the 64th Corps Support Group on March 7. Its Soldiers soon expanded the farm's capacity to issue JP8 and other fuels to 1.6 million gallons. Its mission here was intended to last only 45 days. The company's fuel handlers received and issued fuel; maintained all the tank farm equipment, and routinely drove fuel tankers on combat logistic patrols to other forward operating bases during the day and then returned to man the tank farm at night.

Ross said the complete 10-day process of transferring the tank farm mission served as a model of a detailed relief in place for further handovers by the 701st.

